

temple, and read the Chündēē, daily in their names;—others place bramhūns here for these purposes, for two or three months in the year;—sepoys from all parts of Hindoost^hanū resort to this temple as often as they can obtain leave of absence;—mothers present offerings, praying for the recovery of their children, and promising to bring the restored child in their arms when they come to fulfil their vows²; or, that it shall be invested with the poita³, 'or pass through some other ceremony at the temple;—servants in search of employment make vows to the goddess to present her with a month's wages, if she will raise them to such a situation;—in a word, the occasions of drawing people to this famous temple are as endless as the superstitious hopes and fears, the crimes and the wants of the worshippers.

Goats are devoted to Kalēē, and kept, in some cases, for a long time, till the owner be able to meet the other expenses attending the offerings and worship. These animals are called the goats of Kalēē.

The village of Kalēē-ghüttū (or Kalēē-ghatū) owes the greater part of its present population to this temple; from which near two hundred persons derive their subsistence, exclusive of the proprietors, who amount to about thirty families. Some proprietors have a day in turn, others half a day, and others two or three hours; to whom all the

* The hair of some children is not cut at all till the vow be fulfilled; others only separate a lock of the child's hair, tying it up in a bunch. A large hillock of human hair, collected at the times of shaving when vows have been fulfilled, is formed near the temple.

* A bramhūn once assured me, that he had seen not less than three hundred boys invested with the poita in one day at this place; on which occasion many bloody sacrifices were offered. The concourse of people was immense.

offerings presented in the portion of time thus apportioned belong. All these families have become rich.

In the month Maghū, a festival is held in various places of Bengal in honour of Ghatoo, the god who presides over blotches on the skin; but the assembly at Kalēē-ghatū is very great. At the time of swinging in Choitrū also, the concourse of people at this place is also very large. See the account of Shivū.

I here add a rough account of what is expended on this idol monthly:—

	Rs.	As.	P.
Buffaloes slain, (5)	30	0	0
Goats ditto, (1000)	800	0	0
Sheep ditto, (30)	40	0	0
Rice, (200 cwt.)	440	0	0
Salt, Spices, Pease, Fish, &c.	200	0	0
Clarified Butter,	7	0	0
Milk and Curds,	5	0	0
Sugar, (11 cwt.)	105	0	0
Sweetmeats, (22 cwt.)	360	0	0
Plantains, (25,000)	50	0	0
Evening offerings,	60	0	0
Meat offerings,	90	0	0
Dressed food,	80	0	0
Fees,	233	0	0
Travelling Expenses,	300	0	0
Alms given to the poor by visitors,	200	0	0
Extraordinaries from rich men, and at festivals,	3000	0	0
	Sa. Rs. 6000 0 0		

Seventy-two Thousand Roopees annually, or Nine Thousand Pounds sterling.

SECT. XX.—*Other Forms of Kalēē, &c.*

Chamūnda^b.—This image, which is similar to that of Kalēē, except that Chamūnda is represented with two giants' heads in her hands, and as sitting on a dead body, is seldom or never made. The goddess is worshipped at the festival of Doorga, on three different days.

Shmūshanū-Kalēē^c.—When this image is made, other figures are introduced, as those of the giants Shoombhū and Nishoombhū, of jackals, dead bodies, &c. These giants are represented as sitting on elephants, throwing arrows at the goddess; while the latter is standing on her husband, and aiming blows at them with a sword. The ceremonies of worship are like those performed in honour of Kalēē: the worship begins at the total wane of the moon in Maghū, and continues for three nights. Revelling is carried to the greatest pitch: some of the worshippers, and not unfrequently the sons of rich men, dance before the image naked, 'glorying in their shame.' A few Hindoos adopt this goddess as their guardian deity.

Manūvū-Kalēē^d.—Another form of Kalēē, whose image it resembles except in the colour, which is blue. The worship is celebrated on the fifteenth night of the decrease of the moon in Maghū:—the present fruit, diversion;—and hereafter, heaven. Such are the ideas of the poor deluded Hindoos. A whole village sometimes joins to defray the

^b She who seized Chūdū and Mūdū, two giants.

^c This name denotes, that Kalēē dwells in the place of burning the dead, and presides over cemeteries. Shmūshanū means a cemetery.

^d Viz. in the form of man.

expense, at other times a rich man bears it alone. Many bloody sacrifices are offered, and a great shew made, especially with illuminations; to which are added dancing, singing, music, &c.

Phūlū-hūrēē^e.—This form of Kalēē is that of a black female, with four arms, standing on the breast of Shivū. She is worshipped at the total wane of the moon in the month Jyoisht'hū, or in any other month, at the pleasure of the worshipper. The offerings are numerous, especially of fruits: and buffaloes, goats, and sheep, are sacrificed. The day after the worship, the image is thrown into the river.

Bhūdrū-Kalēē^f.—An image similar to that of Kalēē; the worship also resembles that which is paid to that goddess. The image is in some places preserved, and worshipped daily.

Oogrū-chūnda^g is worshipped at the total wane of the moon in the month Kartikū: in some places temples made of clay are erected in honour of this goddess, in which she is worshipped either daily or monthly.

Anūdū-mūyēē^h.—A black female, with four arms, sitting on a throne; to whom a number of temples are dedicated, containing stone or clay images of the goddess. She is worshipped daily; also on fortunate days, at the pleasure of her numerous disciples; as well as at the great festivals of Doorga, Kalēē, &c. when bloody sacrifices are offered to her.

^e She who receives much fruit.

^f The beneficent.

^g The furious.

^h The joyful.

*Nūvū-pūtrika*¹.—These nine goddesses are worshipped at the great festivals, but with the greatest shew at that of Doorga; when these assistants of Doorga in her wars are represented by nine branches of different trees: Rūmbha, by a plantain^k; Kūchwēē-rōōpa, by a kūchwēē^l; Hūridra, by a hūridra^m; Jāyūntēē, by a jūyūntēēⁿ; Vilwarōōpa, by a vilwū^o; Darimēē, by a darimū^p; Ūshoka, by an ūshokū^q; Manūka, by a manū^r; and Dhanyū-rōōpa^s, by a dhanyū^s.

Bhēmū-chūndēē^t.—This image is made and worshipped at Benares: in Bengal also the goddess is worshipped, especially on a Tuesday, before another image, or a pan of water, or some appointed representative of an idol.

Upūra-jīta^u.—There is no public festival in honour of this goddess, nor is her image set up for worship; but in times of sickness she is worshipped before the shalgramū, when forms of praise from the Tūntrūs are addressed to her.

Vimūla^x.—A stone image of this idol is worshipped in one of the temples erected in Orissa, near the famous temple of Jūgūnnat'hū. Bloody sacrifices are offered to this goddess; but as this place is sacred to Vishnoo, these offerings are made in secret. Vimūla is also worshipped in Bengal at the festivals of Doorga and Kalēē.

Siddhēshwūrēē^y.—In many villages in Bengal one, and

¹ The nine goddesses. ^k Musa paradisaica. ^l Arum esculentum.
^m Curcuma longa. ⁿ Æschynomene seshan. ^o Ægle marmelos.
^p Punica granatum. ^q Jonesia asoca. ^r Arum macrorhizon.
^s Coriandrum sativum. ^t The terrific. ^u The unconquerable.
^x She who purifies. ^y She who fulfils the wishes of her worshippers.

in some large villages several of these images are set up. They are in general made of clay ; but some are of stone. The image is commonly the property of one family, who worship her every day : others in the village worship her when they choose ; but all the gifts and offerings come to the person who owns the image. If a child have a fever, the parents worship the goddess that it may recover, and promise to present various offerings to her if she be propitious. If a woman want a son, she procures a bramhūn to worship the goddess in her name ;—if another person be seeking employment, he prays the goddess to favour him ;—if a koolinū bramhūn wish his daughter to be married, he intercedes with the goddess, and promises to celebrate her worship if she be favourable. On all occasions of particular distress or want, the people resort to these images with their presents and vows. Thieves also worship Siddhēshwūrēē, that they may be favoured with her smiles and be protected in thieving^z. Honest and poor people also worship this image to obtain protection from thieves. An annual festival is held in honour of Siddhēshwūrēē on the same day as the Shyama festival.

SECT. XXI.—*Lūksmēē*

Is called the goddess of prosperity : she is painted yellow, and sits on the water-lily, holding in her right hand the pashū, (a rope,) and in the left a necklace.

^z The goddess Laverna, it is well known, was the protectress of thieves, who, from her, were named Laverniones, and who worshipped her, that their designs and intrigues might be successful : her image was a head without a body.

Vishnoo is said to have obtained this goddess at the churning of the sea^a; at which time all the gods were so charmed with her beauty that they desired to possess her, and Shivũ was entirely overcome by his passion. The reader will remember something similar to this in the account of Venus, who is also said to have sprang from the froth of the sea; and whom, on being presented to the gods, they all desired to marry.

The worship of Lũkshmẽẽ is celebrated in five different months, viz. in Bhadrũ, on the first Thursday of the increase of the moon, in the morning; in Ashwinũ, at the full moon, in the evening; in Kartikũ, on the last day of the decrease of the moon, in the night; on the last day in Poushũ, in the morning; and in Choitrũ, on the first Thursday of the increase of the moon, either in the day or night. The ceremonies are performed before a basket used as a corn-measure, painted red: the worshippers fill this measure with rice in the husk, and put round it a garland of flowers; then cover it with a white cloth; and, encircling it with a number of small shells, place before it a box containing red paint, a comb, &c. The officiating bramhũ performs the usual ceremonies, varying but little from those at the worship of Vishnoo, in the name of the master or mistress of the house. No bloody sacrifices are offered. Bramhũns are entertained rather liberally at this festival; but on the day of worship no alms must be given to the poor, (except cooked food,) nor any money lost; lest this goddess, who is supposed to preside over wealth, and to have taken up her abode at the worshipper's house, should be angry at her riches being wasted.

This worship is celebrated in almost every Hindoo family

^a She is also called the daughter of Bhṛigoo.

five times a year; the frequency of which is not to be wondered at, when it is considered that Lūkshmēē is the goddess of prosperity. If a man be growing rich, the Hindoos say, 'Lūkshmēē is gone to abide at his house;' if he be sinking into poverty, they say, 'Lūkshmēē has forsaken him.' If they wish to abuse another, they call him Lūkshmēē-chara^b.

The morning after the festival, the women take up the corn-measure, and preserve it for some future time of worship: the rice is used in worship during the whole year. At the close of the festival, if a female of the family remember any stories respecting Lūkshmēē, she relates them; and the rest of the family, joined by two or three neighbouring females, sit around and hear. In some places a number of persons subscribe towards the expense of making an image of Lūkshmēē, and worship it on any of the days before-mentioned.

Names. Lūkshmēē, or, the goddess of fortunate signs;—Pūdmalūya, she who dwells on the water-lily;—Pūdma, she who who holds in her hand the water-lily;—Shrēē, she in whom all take refuge;—Hūree-priya, the wife of Hūree.

SECT. XXII.—*Kojagūṛū-Lūkshmēē*^c.

THIS form of Lūkshmēē is worshipped at the full moon in Ashwinū, in the evening, before a corn-measure, sur-

^b In the provincial dialect it is Lūkhēē-chara, that is, luckless; thus forming an extraordinary coincidence of sound and meaning in languages so extremely different.

^c The shastris have commanded that each Hindoo shall remain awake during the night of the full moon in Ashwinū, when a festival is held in honour of this goddess; and from this circumstance this name is derived.

rounded by four plantain trees ; though some persons worship this goddess before an image of Lūkshmēē. Bloody sacrifices are offered. The worshippers invariably drink the water of the cocoa-nut at this festival ; and numbers keep awake the whole night, listening to the filthy songs, and the horrid din of Hindoo music.

SECT. XXIII.—*Sūrūswūtēē.*

THIS is the goddess of learning, the daughter of Brūmha, and the wife of Vishnoo. She is represented as a white woman, standing on the water-lily, and playing on a lute.

On the 5th day of the increase of the moon, in Maghū, the worship of this goddess is performed before her image, or a pen, inkstand, and book ; the latter articles are supposed to form a proper substitute for the goddess, who is called Vagvadinēē, the eloquent. The image is placed on a table, either at the west or south side of the house. After the officiating bramhūn has read the formulas and presented the offerings, each worshipper whose name has been read in the service takes flowers in his hands, and, repeating a prayer, presents them to the goddess ; after which follow gifts to the bramhūns, and a feast.

Every Hindoo who is able to read and write endeavours to celebrate the worship of this goddess : the raja of Būrdwan is said to expend 15,000 roopees annually at this festival. In every Hindoo college, the students keep the festival with great joy : many of them dance naked, and are guilty of every indecency.

The day after the festival, the image is carried in procession through the town, and then thrown into the river. In passing through the streets of Serampore, at the time of this festival in the year 1806, I was exceedingly shocked at observing among the crowd, who were dancing, playing on music, bearing flags, &c. two or three young men quite naked, the mob triumphing in this shocking insult on public decency. To induce young men to resort to their houses, many prostitutes keep this feast, and connect with it all that low merriment which corrupts the mind and draws the attention of the crowd^d.

On this day the Hindoos neither read nor write^e, though they will do any other secular business. They eat only once during the day, and those who are accustomed to eat fish abstain from it on this day.

The Hindoos believe, that from this goddess they derive their learning and powers of eloquence^f, as well as their ability to read and write. Some of those who can neither read nor write, insist upon it, that they ought to worship her, as they derive their powers of speech from

^d In the year 1808, I saw a group of performers reciting the Ramayinü in the street; and on enquiry I found it was before the door of some prostitutes, who had subscribed to bear the expense. The reason assigned was, that it would be an act of merit, helping them in another world; and would also draw men into whoredom. Offerings are sometimes brought home, and shared by a prostitute with her paramour; like the harlot, in the Book of Proverbs, who is represented as saying to the young man she met in the street, 'I have peace-offerings with me; this day have I payed my vows.' *Prov. vii. 14.*

^e The only reason I can find for this is, it is the command of the shastrü.

^f Of an eloquent man the Hindoos say, 'Sürüswütée sits on his tongue.'

her^s. Others however complain, 'Sūrūswūtēē has bestowed nothing on us—why should we perform her worship?'

The image of Sūrūswūtēē is sometimes painted blue, and placed in temples; when she is called Nēēlū-Sūrūswūtēē.

Names. Bramhēē, or, the daughter of Brūmha;—Bharūtēē, she who presides over words;—Bhasha, she who bestows the power of speech;—Sūrūswūtēē, she who through the curse of a bramhūn was turned into a river.

SECT. XXIV.—*Shēētūla*^h

Is painted as a yellow woman sitting on the water-lily, dressed in red, and giving suck to an infant. Before this image, or a pan of water, the worship of this goddess is performed, in any part of the year; but in general on the 7th, 8th, and 9th of the increase of the moon, in the day time. Bloody sacrifices are not offered. On the 10th the image is thrown into the water.

This goddess is also worshipped to obtain preservation from the evil effects of the small-pox. In the months Choitrū and Voishakhū the Hindoos inoculate those of their children who are two years old; on which occasion the ino-

^s Of this fact they give the example of Ravūnū, who, when Rāmū was about to kill him, procured a reprieve by flattering his adversary; but the gods, afraid lest Ravūnū should be spared, sent Sūrūswūtēē into his throat, and caused him to say provoking things to Rāmū.

^h Or, she who cools the body at the time of the small-pox.

culating bramhūnⁱ presents offerings and prayers to this goddess in the name of the child, promising for the parents, that if she be kind to the child, they will present to her certain offerings, &c. as soon as it is recovered. At the close of the ceremony, the bramhūn places the flowers which have been offered in the hair of the child, telling the parents that the goddess will be favourable; and then performs the operation. When the child becomes affected with the disease, the family priest (if the parents be rich enough to pay for it) comes to the house every day, and repeats certain forms of prayer and praise to Shēētūla; after recovery she is again worshipped. If the child become dangerously ill, it is carried to an image of Shēētūla, and bathed in the water which has been offered to this goddess, some of which is given it to drink.

Beggars of different descriptions procure a stone, gild a small part of it, and carry it from place to place, singing the praises of Shēētūla. These mendicants sometimes proclaim in a village, that Shēētūla has appeared to one of them in a dream, and ordered, that in this village the mistress of each house shall beg at three, four, or more doors, and take whatever is given her, and eat it in some neighbouring garden or forest^k. The most dreadful misfortunes being threatened in case of disobedience, the affrighted women beg from door to door, and fulfil the supposed commands of the goddess.

ⁱ The regular Hindoo doctors (voidyū) do not inoculate, but a lower order of bramhūns called doivūgnū, or astrologers.

^k This is a trick to extort some part of the alms from these deluded women.

SECT. XXV.—*Mūnūsa*¹.

THIS goddess, the sister of Vasookee^m, and the wife of Jūrūtkarū, a sage, is called the queen of the snakes, and is worshipped to obtain preservation from their bite. She is represented as sitting on the water-lily, clothed with snakes.

In the month Jyoist'hū, on the 10th of the increase of the moon; also on the 5th of the moon's increase and decrease in Ashwinū and Shravūnū, as well as on the last day of Shravūnū, this goddess is worshipped. On the three last occasions, the worshippers plant branches of the Euphorbia before the house, and worship them. In Shravūnū the worship is celebrated with the greatest shew; on which occasion an image, or some branches of the same tree, or a pan of water, surrounded with snakes made of clay, is placed as the object of worship: in some places, twenty or thirty thousand people assemble; and amidst singing, dancing, music, &c. some persons play with snakes of different kinds, particularly the cobra capello, suffering them to bite them. This play, however, ends fatally when the venomous fangs have not been carefully extracted. The cast called Mal, who play with snakes for a livelihood, profess great regard for Mūnūsa. On the days of the festival, the Hindoos do not kindle a fire, alleging that one of the names of Mūnūsa is Ūrūndhūna, she who does not cook. A day or two before the festival, in some places, the women of the village (perhaps fifty or a hundred, or even two hundred) beg rice, either in their own or an adjoining vil-

¹ Or, Mūnūsa-dévée; the goddess who possesses pleasure in herself.

^m The king of the serpents.

lage; which they offer, in a field in the neighbourhood, in the name of Mūnūsa, but without an image. After thus offering rice, milk, curds, sugar, &c. to the goddess, they eat them on the spot; and this act of holiness, they say, preserves their children from the bite of snakes, as well as assists the parents themselves on their way to heaven. A song founded upon the following story concludes the whole;—Chandū, a merchant, not only refused to worship the goddess, but professed the utmost contempt for her. In process of time, however, she caused his six youngest sons to be killed by the bite of snakes: to avoid the fate of whom, the eldest son, Lūkindūrū, made an iron house, and retired to it; yet Mūnūsa caused the snake Tūkshūkū to enter by a crevice, which destroyed Lūkindūrū on his wedding-day: his widow escaped, and went weeping into the presence of her mother-in-law. The neighbours again attempted to reason with Chandū; but he continued obstinate, declaring that Mūnūsa was no goddess. She appeared to people in dreams, and commanded them to persuade him to celebrate her worship; and, after much entreaty, to pacify the goddess, he was induced to comply: but declared he would present the offerings only with the left hand^a; and, turning back his head, he threw a flower at her image with the left hand. Mūnūsa, however, was so pleased, that she restored his seven sons; and from this circumstance, the worship of this goddess has since been very much celebrated.

When the worship is performed before an image, sheep, goats, and buffaloes are offered to Mūnūsa, and even swine^o.

^a The hand used in washing after stools.

^o Among the Egyptians swine, it is well known, were offered to Bacchus.

When a Hindoo has been bitten by a snake, the persons who pretend to cure him read different incantations containing the names of Mūnūsa. If one or two persons in a village have died by the bite of snakes, all the inhabitants become alarmed, and celebrate the worship of Mūnūsa.

SECT. XXVI.—*Shūshītē*^p

Is a yellow woman sitting on a cat, nursing a child. The Hindoos regard her as the protectress of their children.

Six annual festivals are held in honour of this goddess, viz. in Jyoisht'hū, Bhadrū, Ashwinū, Maghū, and two in Choitrū; on the 6th of the increase of the moon, and on the last day but one of the month.

The worship celebrated in Jyoisht'hū is performed by a bramhūnēē, or an officiating bramhūn, under the vūtū tree^q, or under a branch of this tree planted in the house. At the time of this worship, every woman of the village, dressed in her best clothes, with her face painted, her ornaments on, and her body anointed with oil, goes to the place of worship under the tree, taking in her hand an offering; over each of which the officiating bramhūn performs the usual ceremonies. The offerings are sent to the house of the officiating bramhūn, or distributed amongst the eager by-standers. Among others who are eager to obtain some of these offerings, are women who have not been blessed with children; each of whom sits down pensively among the crowd, and

^p She is worshipped on the sixth lunar day.

^q *Ficus Indica*.

opens the end of her garment to receive what the assembled mothers are eager enough to bestow : when the giver says, 'May the blessing of Shūshtēē be upon you, and next year may you bring offerings—with a child in your arms.' The receiver adds with eagerness, 'Ah! if she bestow this blessing, I will celebrate her worship; I will keep my vows, and bring offerings every year.' This festival is called •Arūnyū-shūshtēē, because the worshippers are directed to walk in some forest on this day, with fans in their hands.

In those houses where the daughter is married, but has not left her parents, they send for the son-in-law; and at the close of the worship the girl's father sends to him, on a metal plate, a flower, some unhusked rice, a piece of string consecrated to the goddess, five or six blades of dōrva grass, a garment, &c. The son-in-law, if a person of respectability, contents himself with sticking the flower in his hair. If a poor man, he puts on the garment, and raises all the other presents to his head. If the son-in-law neglect to stick the flower in his hair, the girl's father becomes very sorrowful; and all the spectators pronounce the former a dead man, for throwing away a flower which has been offered to Shūshtēē.

The worship in the month Bhadrū does not differ from the preceding, except in its being performed by the river side, or at a pool of water, before the stick which is whirled round in churning butter, upon which a fan is placed. In the midst of the worship the women make little paste images of children, and, placing them on leaves of the küntūkēē tree, present them to the goddess, and afterwards

• *Artocarpus integrifolia*.

throw them into the river. This festival is called Chapūra-shūshtē¹.

The Ashwinū festival, distinguished by the name Doorga-shūshtē, is in almost every particular the same as the preceding.

At the Maghū festival, called Shēētūla-shūshtē, the women, on the night preceding, boil a large quantity of rice and pulse for offerings; mixing with the latter, in boiling, a kind of kidney beans and varttakoo². The next morning they bathe very early, and on their return go through the ceremonies of worship in the house, before the two stones with which they grind their spices; and upon which they throw a yellow cloth, smeared with red lead. The worship is finished before ten o'clock, and at noon they eat what the goddess has left, i. e. every thing they gave her.

The two festivals in Choitrū are held on the 6th, and on the last day but one of the month: on the 6th, in the morning, either before a branch of the vūtū, the shalgramū, or some proper representative of an image; and at the close of the month, in the evening, before an image of Shivū. On the 6th the worshippers eat the bud of the Euphorbia inclosed in a plantain; and at the latter festival they fast during the day, and after worship eat some fruit, and some barley flour mixed with curds or water. Rich persons eat sweetmeats. These festivals are called Ūshokū-shūshtē and Nēēlū-shūshtē.

¹ In allusion to the making of these image.

² The fruit of solanum melongena.

Another festival is held in honour of this goddess in some parts of Bengal, in the month Ūgrūhayūnū, called Hūree-shūshtēē. The worship is celebrated before a clay pot, filled with water, having six spouts.

In addition to all these times of worship, females who have lost all their children by death, worship this goddess every month: beside which, after a child is six days old, every father, to preserve the child, performs the worship of the goddess, while the officiating bramhūn reads the incantations; and on the 21st day of the child's age, the mother presents offerings to the goddess with her own hands, while the officiating bramhūn reads the prayers. The first of these ceremonies takes place in the evening, before a branch of the vūtū tree, fastened in the house floor; the *two stones with which spices are ground being placed against the wall in the inside of the house, covered with a piece of cloth.* The husband, at the close, asks the blessing of the goddess on the child, promising to present to her a number of offerings when the child shall be twenty-one days old. Before the door the family place the skull of a cow, rubbing some red lead on its forehead; and in three lumps of cow-dung, put on the forehead, they stick three cowries; upon which also they spread a yellow cloth. The head remains a month at the door of the house, as a kind of charm for the good of the children.

On the 21st day of the child's age, the mother invites ten or fifteen female neighbours, who, with the officiating bramhūn, accompany her to a stone placed at the foot of the vūtū tree, which is supposed to be the representative of the goddess; around which they put a large necklace or garland of flowers, and go through the ceremonies of worship in the usual manner: at the close the mother promises,

on condition that the goddess bless her child, that she will worship her every year. The mother distributes the sweet-meats, &c. that have been offered to the idol among the females present. This festival is called ékooshiya*.

Shūshtēē has no temples in Bengal; her common representative, a rough stone, smeared with red paint, about as large as a man's head, is commonly placed at the root of the sacred vūtū; to which passengers, especially women, pay a degree of reverence. In fulfilling particular vows to Shūshtēē, some worshippers surround the vūtū tree with garlands of flowers, and great numbers of artificial lamps made of clay: others fulfil their vows by building an earthen or brick seat around one of these trees. A female of property, as a thank-offering after child-birth, presents by the hands of a bramhūn a child made of curds, which the bramhūn never fails to devour.

Bloody sacrifices of bullocks, goats, sheep, and sometimes of tame hogs, are offered to Shūshtēē. For receiving these latter offerings some persons call the goddess a cannibal.

At the close of the different festivals held in honour of Shūshtēē, it is common for women to entertain the company with marvellous stories relating to this goddess. The wives of some of the lower casts beg for a share of the offerings at the doors of the bramhūns.

Shūshtēē rides on a cat: hence the Hindoos, especially mothers, avoid hurting this animal, lest the goddess should revenge herself on their children.

* From ékooshū, twenty-one.

CHAP. IV.

INFERIOR CELESTIAL BEINGS, OBJECTS OF
WORSHIP.

THESE beings are either the enemies of the gods, as the ũsoorŭs and rakshŭsŭs; or their companions; or those who are employed as dancers, singers, or musicians in the heavens of the gods. They are worshipped at the great festivals, but have no separate images.

SECT. I.—*The Usoorŭs, or Giants.*

THESE enemies of the gods are the offspring of Kŭsh-yŭpŭ, the progenitor of gods, giants, men, serpents, and birds, by his different wives. They bear a resemblance to the titans or giants of the Grecian Mythology; and stories of their wars with the gods (some of which will be found in this work) abound in the pooranŭs. Indrŭ, Vishnoo, Kartikŭ, and Doorga, are distinguished among the Hindoo deities for their conflicts with these beings*. King Vŭlee, a giant, is worshipped by the Hindoos on their birth-days, with the same forms as are used in the worship of the gods.

* Jupiter was represented as aiming the thunder in his right hand against a giant under his feet: Doorga is aiming the spear in her right hand against an ũsoorŭ under her feet.

Story of the churning of the sea by the gods and ūsoorūs.—The most rancorous hatred has always existed betwixt the ūsoorūs and the gods, although half-brothers; the former having been excluded by the gods from succeeding to the throne of heaven: and dreadful conflicts were carried on betwixt them with various success, till both parties sought to become immortal. The giants performed the most severe religious austerities, addressing their prayers alternately to Vishnoo, Shivū, and Brūmba; but were always unsuccessful. The gods, however, at last obtained this blessing at the churning of the sea of milk; which story is related at length in the Mūhabharūtū and other works:—The gods first took mount Mūndūrū, placed it in the sea, and wrapping round it the serpent Vasookēē, began to whirl it round as the milk-men do the staff in making butter. The gods took hold of the head of the snake, and the giants of the tail; but being almost consumed by the poison from the mouth of the serpent, the gods privately entreated Vishnoo to prevail upon the giants to lay hold of the head; upon which he thus addressed them: ‘How is it,’ said Vishnoo, ‘that you, giants as you are, have taken hold of Vasookēē’s tail?’ The gods and the giants then changed places; and the elephant Oiravūtū first arose from the churned sea to reward their labours; afterward the gem Koustoobhū—the horse Ochoishrūva—the tree Parijatu—many jewels—the goddess Lukshmēē—and then poison. Full of alarm at this sight, the gods applied to Mūha-dévū (Shivū); who, to save the world from destruction, drank up the poison, and received no other injury than a blue mark on his throat^b. Next came up the water of immortality; when the 330,000,000 gods, and the ūsoorūs without number, took their stand on each side, each claiming the mighty

^b Hence this god is called Neelū-kantū, the blue-throated.

boon. Vishnoo proposed to divide it with his own hands : but while the ũsoorũs went to prepare themselves by bathing in the sacred stream, the gods drank up the greatest part of the nectar; and, to give them time to drink the whole, Vishnoo assumed the form of a most captivating female; with which the giants were so charmed, that they totally forgot the nectar. One of them, however, having changed his shape, mixed with the gods, and, drinking of the water of life, became immortal; but Vishnoo, being informed of this circumstance by Sōōryũ and Chũndrũ, (the sun and moon,) cut off the head of the giant. The head and trunk, being thus immortalized, were made the ascending and descending nodes, under the names Rahoo and Kétoo.



SECT. II.—*The Rakshũsũs.*

MANY stories respecting the wars of the rakshũsũs, or cannibals, with the gods, are contained in the pooranũs and other shastrũs, and several will be found in different parts of this work. They are represented as assuming at pleasure the different shapes of horses, tygers, lions, buffaloes, &c.: some have a hundred heads, and others as many arms*. In the Hindoo writings Malēē, Soomalēē, Ravũnũ, Koombhũ-kũrnũ, Vibhēēshũnũ, Indrũ-jit, ũtikayũ, and others, are distinguished as renowned rakshũsũs. As soon as born, these giants are said to arrive at maturity. They devour their enemies. All the rakshũsũs are bramhũns, and are said to dwell in the S. W. corner of the earth.

* Some of the giants of the Grecian mythology, it will be remembered, had a hundred arms.

Noiritū, a rakshūsū, is one of the ten guardian deities of the earth, and presides in the S. W. In this character he is worshipped at all the great festivals. He is represented in the form of meditation used by the bramhūns as a black man, having in his right hand a scimitar.

Story of Koombhū-kūrnū.—Immediately after his birth, this cannibal stretched his arms, which were in proportion to his body, and gathered into his mouth every thing within his reach. At one time he seized five hundred courtezans belonging to Indrū; at another the wives of one hundred sages, and cows and bramhūns without number. Brūmha at length threatened to destroy him, unless he contented him with less, as he would presently eat up the earth. He now became more moderate, and began to perform the most severe austerities in honour of Brūmha; which he continued for ten thousand years. The gods trembled on their thrones, lest Koombhū-kūrnū, obtaining the blessing of Brumha, and especially the blessing of immortality, should swallow up every thing, gods and men. They appealed to Brūmha, and persuaded Sūrswūtē, the goddess of learning, to enter into Koombhū-kūrnū, and excite him to ask this blessing, that he should continue to sleep day and night; which request Brūmha granted, and sent the voracious rakshūsū to enjoy his everlasting sleep. The friends of Koombhū-kūrnū however persuaded Brūmha to change his destiny: who now ordered that he should sleep uninterruptedly six months, but on the last day of the sixth should awake; during half of which day he should fight with and conquer Brūmha, Vishnū, and Shivū, and during the other half be permitted to devour as much as he chose. At one meal he devoured six thousand cows, ten thousand sheep, ten thousand goats, five hundred buffaloes, five thousand deer, and drank four thousand hogheads of

spirits, with other things in proportion. After all, he was angry with his brother Ravūnū, for not giving him enough to satisfy nature. His house is declared to have been twenty or thirty thousand miles long, and his bed the whole length of the house. 'Lūnka itself, says the Ramayūnū, is eight hundred miles in circumference:—where then was the place for this bed?' I have heard this question put by a person to the brahmūns, who, unable to find room for Koombū-kūrnū's bed, were laughed at by the shōōdrūs, their disciples.

The *Gūndhūrūs* and *Kimmūrūs* are celestial choiristers, male and female. The latter have horses' heads^a!!!

The *Vidyā-dhūrūs* are male and female dancers. The *Upsūrūs* are also female dancers, greatly celebrated for their beauty: they have been frequently sent down to earth to captivate the minds of religious devotees, and draw them from those works of merit which were likely to procure them the thrones of the gods. Eight of the ūpsūrūs are mentioned as beyond all others beautiful: Oorvvūshēē, Ménūka, Rūmbha, Pūnchū-chōōra, Tīlottūma, Ghritachēē, Boodbooda, and Mishrū-késhēē. The five first of these are the mistresses of the gods, and keep houses of ill-fame in the heaven of Indrū. When any one of the gods visits the king of heaven, he generally spends some time with one or more of these courtezans.

Story respecting the son of Indrū and an Upsūra.—On a certain occasion, many of the gods were invited to an entertainment at the palace of Indrū. In the midst of the

^a Some idea may be formed of the taste of the early Hindoo poets, who here represent heavenly music as coming from beings with the mouths of horses!

dance, Gündhürvü-senü, the son of Indrū, was fascinated with the charms of one of the ūpsūras; and behaved so indelicately, that his father commanded him to descend to the earth in the form of an ass. All the gods joined the son in endeavouring to appease the angry father; who ultimately directed that Gündhürvü-senü should be an ass in the day, and a man in the night: he promised his son too, that when Dhara, the king, should burn him, he should recover his place in heaven. With this modification of the curse, Gündhürvü-senü sunk to the earth, and alighted in the form of an ass near a pond at Dhara-nūgūrū. In the day the fallen son of Indrū remained in this form near the pond; and in the night, in that of a man, he wandered from place to place to appease his hunger. One day a bramhūn came to this pond to bathe; when Gündhürvü-senü told him that he was the son of Indrū, and requested him to speak to king Dharū, to give him his daughter in marriage. The bramhūn consented; but on speaking to the king, the latter refused to believe that he was Indrū's son, unless he himself had some conversation with him. The next day the king went, with his counsellors and courtiers, and held a conversation with the ass; who related his history, and the cause of his degradation: but the king still refused assent, unless he performed some miracle. To this the ass consented; and in one night raised a fort of iron forty miles square, and six high. The next day the king, seeing the fort finished, was obliged to consent, and to appoint the day of marriage. He invited bramhūns, kings, and other guests without number, to the wedding; and, on the day appointed, with dancing, songs, and a most splendid shew, (the bride being adorned with jewels and the richest attire,) they marched to the iron fort to give the beautiful daughter of king Dharū in marriage to the ass. In that country weddings are celebrated in the day. When all was

ready, they sent a bramhūn to call Gūndhūrvū-sēnū from the pond; who, elated in the highest degree, having bathed, accompanied the bramhūn to the assembly. Hearing music and songs, Gūndhūrvū-sēnū could not refrain from giving them an ass's tune: but the guests, hearing the braying of the ass, were filled with sorrow: some were afraid to speak their minds to the king; but they could not help whispering and laughing one amongst another, covering their mouths with their garments: others muttered to the king, 'O king, is this the son of Indrū? O great monarch! you have found an excellent bridegroom; you are peculiarly happy in having to give your daughter in marriage to the son of Indrū; don't delay the wedding; in doing good delay is improper; we never saw so glorious a wedding; we have heard of a camel being married to an ass, when the ass, looking upon the camel, said, 'Bless me! what a fine form!' and the camel, hearing the voice of the ass, said 'Bless me! what a sweet voice!'—The bramhūns continued: 'In that wedding, however, the bride and bridegroom were equal; but in this marriage, that such a bride should have such a bridegroom is truly wonderful!' Other bramhūns said, 'O king, at other weddings, as a sign of joy, the sacred shell is blown; but thou hast no need of that,' (alluding to the braying of the ass.) The females cried out, 'O mother! what is this! at the time of marriage to have an ass! What a miserable thing! What! will he give such an angelic female in marriage to an ass?'—The king, ashamed, heid down his head. At length Gūndhūrvū-sēnū began to converse with the king in Sūngskritū, and to urge him to the fulfilment of his promise; reminding him, that 'there was no act more meritorious than speaking truth, (putting the king in mind of his promise;) that the body was merely a garment, and that wise men never estimate the worth of a person by the clothes he wears; moreover, he was in this

shape from the curse of his father, and during the night he should assume the body of a man. Of his being the son of Indrū there could be no doubt.' The minds of the guests were now changed, and they confessed, that though he had the outside of an ass, he was unquestionably the son of Indrū; for it was never known that an ass could speak Sūṅskritū. The king, therefore, gave his daughter to him in marriage. By the time the guests were dismissed night drew on, when Gūndhūrvū-sēnū assumed the form of a handsome man, and, having dressed himself, respectfully went into the presence of the king. All the people, seeing so fine a man, and recollecting that in the morning he would become an ass, felt both pleased and sorrowful. The king brought the bride in great state to the palace, and the next day gave her servants, camels, jewels, &c. and dismissed the guests with many presents. Dhara, however, in the midst of his other cares, could not but feel anxious that Gūndhūrvū-sēnū should throw off his ass's body. After a thousand contrivances, he said to himself, 'Gūndhūrvū-sēnū is the son of Indrū; therefore he can never die: at night he casts off his ass's body, and it lies like a dead body: I will therefore burn this body, and thus keep him constantly in the shape of a man.' Accordingly, one night, he caused the ass's body to be burnt,—when Gūndhūrvū-sēnū appeared in his presence, told him that now the curse was removed, and that he should immediately ascend to heaven. After saying this he withdrew, and the king saw him no more.

Nayikas.—These are female companions of Doorga, and are worshipped at the festivals of this goddess. Eight of them have a preeminence over the rest. The Tūntrū-shastrīs declare, that these females visit the worshippers either as their wives, or as mothers; and declare to them

how they may obtain heaven: or, as sisters, bring to them any female they choose, and reveal whatever they desire to know of the present or future. He who wishes to obtain the company of a *Nayika* must worship her thrice a day, and repeat her name at night in a cemetery for seven, or fifteen, or thirty days. On the last night he must continue to repeat her name till she appears to him, and asks what he wishes for. She remains with him during the night, and departs the next morning, leaving with him presents to a large amount; which, however, he must expend the next day, or they will all evaporate. If the worshipper wishes to go to any place in the three worlds, the *Nayika* takes him thither in a moment. If after cohabiting with one of the *Nayikas*, he cohabit with any other female, the *Nayika* immediately destroys him. *Anündü-chündrü*, a *bramhün* of *Soopoorü* in *Vēcrü-bhōōmce*, who died only a few years since, is said to have obtained the fruit of his worshipping the *Nayikas*.

The *Yūkshūs* are the servants of *Koovérü*, the god of riches, and fly through the world preserving the wealth of men. A number of stories, not worth detailing, principally referring to their wars or intrigues, are contained in the *pooranūs*. In the form of meditation, *Koovérü* is described as a white man, having a hammer in his right hand. He is worshipped at the festival of the goddess *Lūkshmēē*, and at all the other great festivals; but has no separate feast, image, nor temple. The *Ramayünü* relates that *Koovérü*, by prayer to *Brümha*, accompanied with religious austerities, obtained *Lünka*, (Ceylon;) the very mire of whose streets is gold. Here he reigned till *Ravünü* dispossessed him. *Brümha* also gave to this god the chariot *Pooshpükü*; which had the property of expansion, and of going wherever the charioteer wished. From *Lünka*, *Koovérü*

went to mount Koilasū, where he is supposed to be at present.

Pishachūs.—These messengers of the gods guard the sacred places, the resort of pilgrims. Sixty thousand are said to guard the streams of the Ganges from the approach of the profane.

The *Goodghūkūs*, the *Siddhūs*, the *Bhōōtūs*, and the *Charūnūs*.—These are beings of inferior orders, residing with the gods as servants.

There are several other orders of females, as the *Yoginēēs*, *Dakinēēs*, *Kakinēēs*, *Shakhinēēs*, *Bhōōtinēēs*, and *Prétinēēs*, who wait upon Doorga or Shivū, as their attendants. All these also are worshipped at the great festivals.

CHAP. V.

OF THE TERRESTRIAL GODS.

THE Hindoo celestial goddesses, it will be seen, are very few. There are no more indeed than three which can be considered as really distinct, and as holding a distinguished place among this class of Hindoo deities : these are Doorga, Sūrūswūtēē, and Lūkshmēē. Many of the others are different forms of Doorga ; and Mūnūsa, Shūshītēē, and Shēētūla, would have been placed among the terrestrial goddesses, but they do not seem to have had an earthly origin.—I now proceed to give an account of the terrestrial gods, some of whom are worshipped with more shew than any of the celestial deities.

SECT. I.—*Krishnū*.*

ACCORDING to the Shrēē-Bhagūvūtū, Mūhabharūtū, and other works, this god, a form of Vishnoo, was incarnate to destroy kings Shishoo-palū and Kūngsū, and a number of giants.

Krishnū was born at Mūt'hoora ; his father's name was Vūseo-dévū, a kshūtriyū, and his mother's Dévūkēē ; but Kūngsū seeking to destroy him when an infant, his father

The black.

fled to Vūnda-vūnū, and concealed him in the house of Nūndū, a voishyū: hence he is sometimes called the son of Nūndū.

Many stories are recorded of Krishnū in the pooranūs: in his infancy he deprived a giant of her breath, who had poisoned her breasts before she gave him suck^f;—soon after he destroyed a carriage against which he hurt his foot, when laid by his nurse at the door to sleep^g;—Nūndū's wife, when looking into his mouth one day, had a surprising view of the three worlds, with Brūmha, Vishnoo, and Shivū sitting on their thrones;—at the age of eight years he took up mount Govūrdhūnū in his arms, and held it as an umbrella over the heads of the villagers and their cattle during a dreadful storm, with which the angry king of heaven was overwhelming them;—he created a number of cattle, and also of boys and girls, to replace those which Brūmha had stolen from Vūnda-vūnū;—he destroyed a large hydra, which had poisoned the waters of the Yūmoona;—he seduced the wife of Ayūnū-ghoshū, a voishyū, and sported with 16,000 milk-maids in the wilderness of Vrindū;—he next assumed four arms, destroyed Kūngsū, and placed Kūngsū's father on the throne;—after this he was engaged in various quarrels, and had to combat with many formidable enemies; which induced him to build a fort at Dwa-rūka, where he resided, and married two wives;—he next joined the family of Yoodhisht'hirū in their war with the race of Dooryodhūnū;—and, lastly, destroyed Shishoo-palū. He closed his life with an act worthy of such a character, by

^f It is common for a Hindoo nurse to offer the breast to a neighbour's child, when she happens to be on a visit.

^g Mothers frequently lay their infants exposed to the rays of the sun to sleep, after rubbing their breasts with oil.

destroying his whole progeny¹; and was at length himself accidentally killed by an arrow, while sitting under a tree.

It is very possible, if any real Hindoo history could be discovered, that many of these facts would be found recorded in the life of a Hindoo king of this name; which facts have been embellished by the Asiatic poets till they have elevated the hero into a god. The images of this lascivious and blood-stained hero are now worshipped by the Hindoos with an enthusiasm, which transforms them into the very image of Krishnū himself.

This god is represented as a black man, holding a flute to his mouth with both hands: his mistress Radha stands on his left.

On the 8th of the moon's decrease in the month Bhādrā, an annual festival is held at the night to celebrate the

¹ The posterity of Krishnū, say several purāṇas, were destroyed by the curse of a rāshūn; but as all events are ascribed to Krishnū by his votaries, the destroying his own family is referred to his agency. So infamous is the character of this god, even among those who hope for salvation through him, that Vibhūtiśinghū, a blind poet, wrote the following verse, which certainly contains the severest possible censure of this profligate deity:

‘Oñ Krishnū! thou who didst destroy thy own offspring;
Thou who didst renounce (Sēn) the spotless daughter of Zundā, to the wilderness;
Thou who didst cast down to hades Vālee, who had given thee his all—
Who would think on thee, if thou wert not the deliverer from death?’

In exact agreement with this Śungskrīṇ verse, was the declaration made before several persons in company in the year 1812, by Rām-nāth, the second Śungskrīṇ pundit in the College of Fort William, who, speaking of the universal profligacy of manners in Oude, declared, that ‘every house contained a Krishnū.’

birth of this god. On this day all the worshippers fast*. The regular Hindoos, and the disciples of the Gosaees†, sometimes differ a day or two in celebrating this feast. After the ceremonies of worship are concluded, the worshippers assemble before the temple near a hole cut in the ground, into which have been thrown water, oil, curds, turmeric, and earth; and seize first one person and then another, and throw them into this hole; and others jump into it. Music, dancing, singing obscene songs, &c. accompany these acts of rude merriment; at the close of which, dancing through the streets, the crowd go to some pool, or to the river, and wash themselves; and thus the festivity ends.

In the month Shrivāṇa another festival is held in honour of Krishṇa, called Jhoolāṇa-yatra‡. On the 11th night of the increase of the moon this festival begins; when a chair or throne, containing the image, being suspended from the ceiling of an adjoining room to the temple, the proprietor begins to swing the image, and other brāhmin guests continue it at pleasure. At ten o'clock the god is taken to his usual place, when the different forms of worship are repeated, amidst the offering of flowers, incense, sweetmeats, fruits, and other acts of adoration. During the celebration of worship in the house, the crowd out of doors sing, dance,

* In a Hindoo fast, the person abstains, for three days, from anointing himself with oil, from connubial intercourse, from fish, every thing fried, and eats only once a day. At the time of a Jewish fast, the person is said to have 'afflicted his soul;' but among the Hindoos fasting and merriment go together. The Jewish fast was connected with moral sentiment: the Hindoos fast as an act of mere ceremonial purity.

† The Gosaees are the religious leaders of a large portion of the worshippers of Krishṇa. Gosae is a term of respect equivalent to Sir.

‡ The swinging festival.

and make a horrid discord with barbarous instruments of music, connecting with the whole every kind of indecency. At twelve o'clock the owner of the image entertains a great multitude of brāmhūns. After eating and drinking, they literally 'rise up to play:' youths, dressed so as to represent Krishnū and his mistress Radha, dance together; and the festivities are thus continued till the crowd retire at day-light. Some keep this feast for five nights, beginning on the eleventh; and others for three nights, beginning on the thirteenth.

On the 15th of the increase — the moon in the month Kartikū, another festival is held during three nights, to celebrate the revels of this impure god with the milk-maids. It is called the Rasū. Each night, after the ceremonies in the temple are closed, the crowd carry the image out with much noise, music, singing, and dancing; and place it in a brick building in the street, which is open on all sides, and has one highly elevated sitting place. This building is annually gilt, ornamented, and grandly illuminated for this festival. Sixteen small images of Krishnū are necessary on this occasion; but a very small gold image, about the size of a breast-pin, is placed as the object of adoration, and afterwards given to the officiating brāmhūn. At the close of the festival, the clay images are thrown into the river.

Round the building in the street booths are erected, filled with sweetmeats, playthings, and other articles, as at an English fair. Here fathers and mothers, leading their children by the hand, or carrying them on their hips^a, come

^a This is the way in which all Hindoos carry their children; a child is rarely seen in a person's arms, as in Europe. The same custom appears to have existed among the Jews: 'Ye shall be borne upon her sides, and be dandled upon her knees.' *Isaiah lxxvi. 12.*

for *fairings*. Thieves and gamblers are very busy at these times¹; and upon the whole it is amazing how much a European is here reminded of an English race-ground. At these times I have seen the grey-headed idolater and the mad youth dancing together; the old man lifting up his withered arms in the dance, and giving a kind of horror to the scene, which idolatry itself, united to the vivacity of youth, would scarcely be able to inspire². In England the bait to corrupting amusements is merely a horse-race: but in Bengal the Hindoo is at once called to what he considers divine worship and to a licentious festival; no one imagining, but that worship and adultery may be performed in the same hour. About four or five in the morning the crowd carry the god back to the temple; and then retire to cure their hoarseness and rest their wearied bodies.

On the fourth morning, having brought the god home, after the usual ceremonies, they sing songs in celebration of the actions of Krishnū; and continue them till ten till

¹ In the year 1810, on account of the depredations of preceding years, the magistrate of Serampore forbade the erection of booths and all games at this festival: in consequence of which an expense of near four hundred rupees, incurred in performing the ceremonies of worship, fell upon the owner of the image of Krishnū, who would otherwise have received as much from the proprietors of the booths and gaming shops.

² Illuminations, fireworks, and the gilding of their temples, give a very showy effect to Hindoo ceremonies, which are often performed at the time of the full moon, and at midnight. A moon-light night in India is highly pleasant. At the time of the Rasi festival, I have seen a scene so gaily illuminated and adorned, that the whole seemed enchantment; every native, as he approached the god, threw himself on the ground with the most profound reverence, and muttered his praise with rapture as he mingled in the delighted crowd. Could I have forgotten that these people were perpetrating a dreadful crime, and that these nightly festivals were connected with the greatest impurities, I should have been highly gratified.

twelve or one o'clock in the day. Many come to hear, who present various offerings to the god; after which a grand feast is given to the bramhūns. The expenses of this festival are defrayed either by rich natives, or from the revenues of the temples.

At the full moon in Phalgooni, the Dolā¹, another swinging festival, is held.—Fifteen days before the full moon the holidays begin, from which time the Hindoos assemble in ^{the} night to sing and dance; and in the day they wander ^{through} the streets, throwing red powder^m at the passers by, either with their hands or through a syringe. On the night before the full moon, the ceremonies of worship are performed; at the close of which, having besmeared themselves with red powder, they carry the god from his house to some distance, amidst the sounds of music, dancing, fireworks, singing, &c. A bamboo, with a straw man tied to it, having been erected in some plain, they place the god here, and again worship him. After three hours have been spent in various sports, especially with fireworks, they set fire to the bamboo and straw, carrying back the image to the temple. Very early in the morning they bathe the god, set him on a chair, and then worship him, rocking him in this chair, and throwing upon him red powder. At twelve o'clock at noon these ceremonies are repeated with greater splendour; when many

¹ All these festivals are intended to represent the obscene acts or play of Krishnū. This is the play of swinging common to young folks in Europe. I am told that on this occasion, in various places in Hindoostan, many families sit up all night, swinging by the light of the moon. They suspend a cord betwixt two trees, and while some are swinging, others are singing impure songs, and others dancing.

^m This powder is made with the roots of wild ginger, coloured with sappan wood. Other ingredients are added to make superior kinds.

offerings are presented, and the bramhūns entertained. About four the festival closes by another repetition of the same ceremonies. The god is then washed, anointed, clothed, and put into the temple; where food remains before him for some time, and is then given to the bramhūns.

Besides these many other festivals less popular are held in the course of the year.

Many small black stones, having image of Krishnū cut in them, are to be found in the houses of the people; to which different names are given, but they are all of Krishnū. The temples dedicated to Krishnū are very numerous; and it is a scandalous fact that the image of Radha, his mistress, always accompanies that of Krishnū, and not those of his wives Rookminēe and Sūtyū-bhama. Many persons may be heard in the streets, and when sitting in their shops, repeating to themselves and to parrots the names of Radha and Krishnū, as works of merit. Pantomimical entertainments are frequently represented, in which the lewd actions of this god are exhibited.

Six parts out of ten of the whole Hindoo population of Bengal are supposed to be the disciples of this god. The far greater part of these, however, are of the lower orders, and but few of them bramhūns. The mark on their foreheads consists of two straight lines from the tip of the nose to the back of the head.

A story of Krishnū—The death of Shishoo-palū is thus related :—A quarrel arose at a sacrifice between Krishnū and this monarch, respecting the point of precedence, which

^a The greater part of the bramhūns are disciples of the female deities, (Shaktis.)

Shishoo-pālū would not resign to Krishnū: 'What!' says he, 'shall I be preceded by the son of a cowherd; one who has eaten with a cow-keeper, who has led cows to pasture, and has been guilty of all manner of abominations?' Krishnū restrained his rage for some time; but at length became exceedingly angry, and cut off his head at one blow. It was prophesied of Shishoo-pālū, that as soon as he saw the person by whose hands he should die, two of his four arms would fall off; and this is said to have happened. The moment he saw Krishnū at the meeting of the kings at this sacrifice.

Another story.—On a certain occasion the lascivious Krishnū heard, that king Dāndēē possessed a horse, which every night assumed the form of a beautiful female. Krishnū asked for this horse; but the king refused him, and fled to Bhēēmū, Krishnū's friend; who, rather than abandon a person who had claimed his protection, resolved to break the ties of friendship with Krishnū, and go to war with him. A war commenced, which continued to rage with the utmost fury, till the horse, assuming the shape of a kinnārēē, ascended to heaven, the period of the curse under which it lay being expired.

Krishnū ruining his friend by urging him to declare a deliberate falsehood.—In the war betwixt the family of Dooryodhūnū and the Pandūvās, Dronachariyū was so mighty a warrior that the Pandūvās had no hope of success, unless they could cut him off; to accomplish which, Krishnū contrived to throw Dronachariyū off his guard, by causing it to be reported through the army, that his son Ushwātt'hama was killed. The father refused to believe the report, unless Yoodhist'hīrū would say it was true. Krishnū pressed Yoodhist'hīrū to tell this lie, as it would

insure success to their affairs; and, in cases of extremity, the shāstrū had declared it lawful to employ falsehood. Yoodhist'hirū at first positively refused, but was at length persuaded by the entreaties of Krishnū, Ūrjoonū, and others; who told him the assertion would not be a lie, as an elephant of Dōryodhūnū's, of the same name, had actually been killed in battle. Dronacharyū was so overcome when he was thus brought to believe the news, that Ūrjoonū soon dispatched him; which completely changed the face of the battle. On account of his falsehood, Yoodhist'hirū, in going to heaven, was terrified by a sight of the torments of hell.—Where did Krishnū, the father of this lie, go?

Theft and murder committed by Krishnū.—When Krishnū was going to Mūt'hoora to destroy Kūngsū, as he approached the city he felt ashamed of the meanness of his dress, which consisted only of some shreds of cloth, like ropes, tied round his loins; and said to his brother Būlū-ranū, 'All are going to this sacrifice elegantly dressed; we cannot go in this condition.' Krishnū then sent his brother to a washerman, who however would not part with the clothes in his possession, as they belonged to king Kūngsū. A quarrel ensued, in the midst of which Krishnū killed the washerman, and carried off the clothes. These freebooters next went to a shop, and stole two necklaces; and afterwards seized some sandal-wood, which a deformed woman was taking to the palace of Kūngsū; but, to reward her, Krishnū pulled her straight, and made her more beautiful than the ūpsūras. The woman asked Krishnū, since he had made her so beautiful, who should marry her. Krishnū asked her, to whom she wished to be united. She said, to himself;—and from that time she became his mistress.

SECT. II.—*Gopalū*°.

This is an image of Krishnū in his childhood. He is resting on one knee, with his right hand extended, craving some sweetmeats from his mother.

This infant god is worshipped at the festivals in honour of Krishnū; the ceremonies are the same, though the formulas are different.

Those who preserve stone, or brass, or other images of this god in their houses, as many do, worship them every day, or whenever they choose. Many persons receive the initiating incantation of *Gopalū* as their guardian deity.

Girēeshu-chūndrū, the raja of Nūdēya, in the year 1807, had two dreams, in which the god *Gopalū* appeared to him, and told him, that in a certain place in Nūdēya, a beautiful image of him was buried deep in the ground. The raja paid no attention to his dreams, till the god appeared to him a third time, telling him the same thing: when he consulted his principal servants, who sent labourers to dig up the image; but none was found. A few nights after, *Gopalū* appeared again, and told the raja that he was to be found in such a place, describing the spot in a more particular manner. The raja again sent his servants, who found the image. The greatest rejoicings took place at Nūdēya on this occasion; learned bramhūns were called; and a vast concourse of people collected from the surrounding country to behold this miraculously discovered god, and to

° The cowherd.

witness his installation, at which four thousand roopees were expended: a temple was afterwards erected on the spot; and the god placed in it. This image is now become very famous: the offerings presented to it do not amount, it is said, to less than two hundred roopees monthly.

Another image of the infant Krishnū, called Balū-gopalū, made of stone or metal, is kept in the houses of many, and worshipped daily, as well as at the festivals in honour of Krishnū.

SECT. III.—*Gopēe-nat'hū*.

THIS is another form of Krishnū. In some places the image is worshipped every day, as well as at the festivals in honour of Krishnū.

A celebrated image of this god is set up at Ūgrū-dvēpū, where an annual festival is held, on the 11th and five following days of the decrease of the moon, in Chaitrū. The origin of this image is so recent, that the story is known to every Hindoo:—Two religious mendicants, since become famous among the followers of Krishnū, Choitānyū and Nityanūndū, sent their disciple Ghoshū-t'hakoōrū, who did not relish an austere life, to Ūgrū-dvēpū, and directed him to take a certain stone with him, and make an image of Gopēe-nat'hū, which he should set up there and worship. Ghoshū-t'hakoōrū obeyed his spiritual guides; took the stone on his head; set it up as a god, the gift of Choitānyū and Nityanūndū, and began to

The god of the milk-maids.

worship it in public daily. The god soon appeared to him in dreams, and revealed a number of secret things; so that by degrees Gopēē-nat'hū of Ūgrū-dwēēpū became very famous. One night a stranger came to the temple at a very late hour, when no one was awake to give him refreshment. The god himself, however, in the form of Ghoshū-t'hakoorū, took an ornament from his ancle, and purchased some food for the stranger at an adjoining shop. In the morning there was a great noise in the town about this ornament, when the shopkeeper and the stranger declared these facts, so creditable to the benevolence of the god; and from this circumstance the fame of Gopēē-nat'hū spread still wider. After the death of Ghoshū-t'hakoorū, the god appeared to his successor, and directed him to perform the funeral rites; in the celebration of which it was contrived that the god himself should present the offering to the manes: for when the kooshū grass, the rice, and the water were put into the hands of the image, the god (a little more water than usual being poured into his hand) poured out the offering; when the crowd set up a great shout, declaring that the god himself had presented the offering to the manes. At present, it is said, this god brings in not less than 25,000 roopees annually to his owner.

At the above-mentioned festival, it is supposed that 100,000 people assemble each day at Ūgrū-dwēēpū; among whom are great multitudes of lewd women, who accompany the religious mendicants. Filthy songs about Krishnū and his mistresses are sung by the crowd, and all manner of indecent diversions practised. Different casts eat together here.

After the death of Ghoshū-t'hakoorū, the image fell into the hands of the raja, or lord of the soil; who sent

brahmuns to perform the ceremonies before the image, and receive the offerings. Raja Nūvū-krishnū, of Calcutta, once seized this image for a debt of three lacks of roopees, due to him from the owner, raja Krishnū-chūndrū-rayū. The latter afterwards regained the image by a suit at law; but not till Nūvū-krishnū had made another Gopē-nat'hū exactly like it.

All this has arisen out of a stone given by two mendicants to one of their companions!—Who can avoid feeling a mingled sensation of disgust and pity, while he beholds such multitudes, the abject slaves of a superstition so degrading?

SECT. IV.—*Jugūnnat'hū*.*

THE image of this god has no legs, and only stumps of arms; the head and eyes are very large. At the festivals the brahmuns adorn him with silver or golden hands.

Krishnū, in some period of Hindoo history, was accidentally killed by Ūngūdū, a hunter; who left the body to rot under the tree where it fell. Some pious person, however, collected the bones of Krishnū, and placed them in a box: where they remained till Indrū-dhoomnū, a king, who was performing religious austerities to obtain some favour

* The lord of the world, from *jūgūt*, the world, and *nat'hū*, lord.

* The Athenians placed statues at their doors to drive away thieves, which they called *Hermæ*, from *Mercury*. These images had neither hands nor feet, and hence *Mercury* was called *Cyllenius*, and by contraction *Cyllus*, from *Kullos*, viz. without hands or feet.

of Vishnōo, was directed by the latter to form the image of Jūgūnnat'hū, and put into its belly these bones of Krishnū, by which means he should obtain the fruit of his religious austerities. Indrū-dhoomnū enquired who should make this image; and was commanded to pray to Vishwū-kūrmū. He did so, and obtained his request; but Vishwū-kūrmū at the same time declared, that if any one disturbed him while preparing the image, he would leave it in an unfinished state. He then began, and in one night built a temple upon the blue mountain in Orissa, and proceeded to prepare the image in the temple: but the impatient king, after waiting fifteen days, went to the spot; on which Vishwū-kūrmū desisted from the work, and left the god without hands or feet. The king was very much disconcerted; but on praying to Brūmha, he promised to make the image famous in its present shape.

Indrū-dhoomnū now invited all the gods to be present at the setting up of this image: Brūmha himself acted as high priest, and gave eyes and a soul to the god, which completely established the fame of Jūgūnnat'hū. This image is said to lie in a pool near the present temple, at Jūgūnnat'hū-kshétrū in Orissa, commonly known among the English by the name of Jūgūnnat'hū's pagoda. The particulars of this place will be found in the account of the Hindoo holy places, the resort of pilgrims.

Jūgūnnat'hū has many temples in Bengal, built by rich men as works of merit, and endowed either with lands, villages, or money. The worship of this god is performed in these temples every morning and evening; at which times people come to see the god, or prostrate themselves

before him. During the intervals of worship, and after the god has partaken of the offerings, he is laid down to sleep*, when the temple is shut up till the next hour of worship.

Bramhūns may make offerings of boiled rice to this or to any other god, but shōōdrūs cannot: they are permitted to offer only dried riceⁿ. The food which is offered to Jūgūnnathū is either eaten by the bramhūns and their families at the temples, or by passengers and others, who purchase it of those shopkeepers that have bought it of the bramhūns; a little is given to the poor.

There are two annual festivals in Bengal in honour of this god; the Snanū-yatra, and the Rūt'hū-yatra.

At the Snanū-yatra, in the month Jyoisht'hū, this lord of the world, wrapped in a cloth, is carried out and placed in a seat on a large terrace built in an open place near the temple. Here the bramhūns, surrounded by an immense concourse of spectators, bathe the god by pouring water on his head, during the reading of incantations. The people at the close of the ceremony make obeisance, some by lifting their hands to their foreheads, and others by prostration, and then depart, assured by the shastrūs that they shall be subject to no more births, but be admitted to heaven after the death of this body. The bramhūns then wipe this creator of the world, and carry him back to the

* The images of the gods in all the Hindoo temples, at certain hours, are laid down to sleep; at least, all those that are small enough to be laid down and lifted up again.

ⁿ The bramhūns do not eat the boiled rice of the shōōdrūs. Sweetmeats, fruit, the water of the Ganges, &c. are things received from shōōdrūs. Yet there are a few bramhūns who refuse even sweetmeats and water from the hands of shōōdrūs.

temple; after which the ceremonies of worship are performed before him with great shew. This *snanũ*, however, is not confined to *Jũgũnnat'hũ*; but at this time all the different images of Vishnoo, throughout the country, are bathed. It is the custom of the Hindoos to feed their children with rice for the first time when they are six, seven, or nine months old. On this day, before the ceremony of feeding the child, they bathe it, repeating incantations. Krishnũ partook of his first rice at the full moon in *Jyoist'hũ*; in commemoration of which, this *snanũ-yatra* is performed annually by the worshippers of any separate form of Vishnoo.

About seventeen days after the *snanũ-yatra*, on the second of the increase of the moon in *Asharhũ*, the *Rũ'thũ* or car festival is held. Before the god is taken out of the temple to be placed on the car, the usual ceremonies of worship are performed. The car belonging to the image near Serampore is in the form of a tapering tower, between thirty and forty cubits high. It has sixteen wheels, two horses, and one coachman, all of wood. *Jũgũnnat'hũ*, his brother *Bũlũ-ramũ*, and their sister *Soobhũdra*, are drawn up by ropes tied round the neck, and seated on benches in an elevated part of the carriage; when a servant on each side waves a tail of the cow of Tartary, called a *chamũrũ**. The crowd draw the carriage by means of a hawser; their shouts, as the carriage proceeds, may be heard at the distance of a mile. Being arrived at the appointed spot, the *bramhũns* take out the images, and carry them to the temple of some other god, or to a place prepared for them, where they remain eight days. At Serampore, *Jũgũn-*

* The *chamũrũ* is a necessary appendage to royalty among the Hindoos.

nat'hū, and his brother and sister, visit the god Radha-vūllūbhū^y; and here the wives of bramhūns, who are never seen at shews, and who seldom leave home, come to look at Jūgūnnat'hū. The car stands empty during this time, and the crowd flock to gaze at the indecent figures^z, alluding to the abominations of the gods, which are painted all over it. Temporary shops are erected near the place where the car stands, like booths on a race-ground^a. At the end of eight days, the god is again drawn up by the neck, placed in the car, and carried back to the place from whence he came; but the crowd is not quite so great as when the carriage is drawn out. Many recent instances might be collected of persons, diseased or in distress, casting themselves under the wheels of this ponderous car, and being crushed to death.

This festival is intended to celebrate the diversions of Krishnū and the milkmaids, with whom he used to ride out in his chariot^c.

SECT. V.—*Būlū-ramū*^b.

THIS god was cotemporary with Krishnū. His image, painted white, almost always goes with that of Jūgūn-

^y Another form of Krishnū. The name intimates that this god is the paramour of Radha.

^a Romans i. 27.

^a The spirit of gambling is very prevalent at this festival. I have been credibly informed, that, a year or two ago, at Serampore, a man actually sold his wife for a slave, in order to supply himself with money for gaming.

^b He who pursues pleasure, or bestows it, in his own strength.

nat'hū, though in a few temples it is set up alone. At the worship of Jūgūnnat'hū, and also at that of Krishnū, a short service is performed in the name of Būlū-ramū, whose image also sometimes accompanies that of Krishnū. Some place the image of Révūtēē by the side of her husband. From the sūtyū to the kūlee-yoogū this female, the daughter of king Révūtū, remained unmarried^c. The king, at length, asked Brūmha, to whom he should give his daughter in marriage: Brūmha recommended Būlū-ramū, who saw her for the first time when ploughing. Notwithstanding her immense stature, (it is said her stature reached as high as a sound ascends in clapping the hands seven times,) Būlū-ramū married her; and to bring down her monstrous height, he fastened a plough-share to her shoulders.

SECT. VI.—*Ramū*^d.

THE following history of this god forms a brief table of contents of the Ramayūnū^e, an epic poem, much celebrated among the Hindoos.

At a certain period, king Dūshū-rūt'hū, having been cherished with great affection by his wife Kékoiyēē^f, promised her whatever she should ask. She told him that she would avail herself of his promises on some future occa-

^c This old maid must have been 3,888,000 years old at the time of her marriage, if we date her birth from the beginning of the sūtyū-yoogū.

^d The happy, or he who makes happy.

^e I have omitted the long table of contents of this work inserted in the first edition, thinking it unnecessary, as the Ramayūnū with an English translation is issuing from the Serampore press. [The second edition is now published in England. *Ed.*]

^f Dūshū-rūt'hū had 250 wives.

sion; and when Ramū was called to the coadjutorship by the voice of the people, and to which Dūshū-rūt'hū gladly assented, Kékoiyēē reminded the king of his promise; and at the instigation of a deformed and revengeful female slave, whom Ramū had formerly beaten, she petitioned that Ramū might be exiled to a distant forest to live as an ascetic, and that Bhūrūtū her son might be installed in his stead. The king reluctantly complied. Ramū however readily submitted, and went into the forest, taking with him Sēēta and his brother Lūkshmūnū. Dūshū-rūt'hū soon died of grief for Ramū; after which a shoe of Ramū's was placed on the throne, Bhūrūtū refusing the crown. When in the forest, Sōōrpū-nūkha*, the sister of Ravūnū, a giant who reigned at Lūnka, (Ceylon,) proposed marriage to Ramū, who sent her to Lūkshmūnū; he sent her again to Ramū; Ramū sending her back to Lūkshmūnū, the latter cut off her nose: on this she fled to her brothers Khūrū and Dōōshūnū, who immediately made war upon Ramū; Ramū, however, destroyed them, as well as their army of 14,000 giants, (rakshūsūs.) Ravūnū, on hearing of these events, requested Murēēchū, another giant, to go to the residence of Ramū in the form of a beautiful deer, and tempt Ramū to pursue him, while he stole Sēēta. Marēēchū consented, and Ramū, at the urgent request of Sēēta, pursued the flying deer, leaving Lūkshmūnū to guard his family. When Marēēchū, in the form of the deer, was wounded, he set up a loud cry like the voice of Ramū; which greatly alarmed Sēēta, who prevailed on Lūkshmūnū to follow her beloved husband. While Sēēta was thus left alone, Ravūnū carried her off in triumph. The poem then describes the grief of Ramū and his brother for the

* A name given to her on account of her having nails like a Hindoo fan for winnowing corn.

loss of Sēēta. Ravūnū, in taking away Sēēta, was met by Jūtayoo, a vulture, formerly the friend of Dūshū-rūf'hū. This bird endeavoured to deliver Sēēta by fighting with Ravūnū; but being unsuccessful, Sēēta directed him to inform Ramū, that Ravūnū was carrying her away. Ramū in his search for Sēēta met with this bird, which, as soon as it had delivered this account, died of the wounds it had received in fighting with Ravūnū. Ramū and his brother now went forward in pursuit of Ravūnū, and met with the giant Kūbūndhū, whom they destroyed. This giant immediately assumed another body, and informed Ramū that he had formerly lived in the heaven of Indrū, but had been cursed, and sent down to take the body of a rakshūśū. He further informed Ramū, that two brothers, (monkies,) Soogrēēvū and Balēē, were in a state of warfare, Balēē having seduced his brother's wife; he therefore advised Ramū to destroy Balēē, and contract an alliance with Soogrēēvū, by whose means he should obtain Sēēta. Ramū took this advice, and having destroyed Balēē^h, restored Soogrēēvū to his kingdom. To prove his gratitude to Ramū, Soogrēēvū collected his army of monkies, and sent them to seek for Sēēta. The monkies who went southward met Sūmpatee, a vulture without wings, brother to Jūtayoo, who informed them that he had seen Sēēta at Lūnka, (Ceylon.) Hūnooman, one of Soogrēēvū's generals, immediately leaped across the sea, (five hundred milesⁱ), to Lūnka, where he found Sēēta in a garden belonging to Ravūnū; to whom he gave a ring from Ramū, while she, in return, sent Ramū a jewel from her hair. Hūnooman

^h Ramū, compared with Krishnū, is a pure character; yet we see him here, without provocation, destroy the rightful heir to a throne, and set up one who had seduced the wife of his brother.

ⁱ No one can doubt the propriety of making a spy of a monkey who can leap 500 miles at once.

then began to destroy one of Ravūnū's gardens; who sent people to kill Hūnooman, but he destroyed those who were sent. Ravūnū then sent his son Ūkshūyū against the mischievous monkey; but he also was destroyed. Ravūnū next sent his eldest son Indrūjit, who seized Hūnooman, and bringing him before his father, the king ordered his attendants to set fire to his tail; when the enraged monkey, with his burning tail, leaped from house to house, and set all Lūnka on fire: after finishing which he came to Sēēta, and complained that he could not extinguish the fire that had kindled on his tail; she directed him to spit upon it, and he, raising it to his face for this purpose, set his face on fire. He then complained, that when he arrived at home with such a black face, all the monkeys would laugh at him. Sēēta, to comfort him, assured him, that all the other monkeys should have black faces also; and when Hūnooman came amongst his friends, he found that, according to the promise of Sēēta, they had all black faces as well as himself. After hearing the account brought by Hūnooman, Ramū and Lūkshmūnū, with Soogrēēvū and his army of monkeys, proceeded to invade Lūnka. They tore up the mountains, trees, and other large substances, and cast them into the sea to form a bridge^k;

^k Ramū's bridge. See the map of Hindoost'han. Ramū was at a loss how to lead his army across the sea to Lūnka. He fasted, and prayed to Sagūrū for three days, and was angry with the god for not appearing to him. He therefore ordered Lūkshmūnū to fire an arrow, and carry away the god's umbrella. He did so, and the arrow, carrying away the umbrella, penetrated even as far as patalū. The god, aroused from his sleep, exclaimed, 'Is Ramū arrived by the sea side, and I have not known it?' He then directed Ramū to apply to king Nūlū, to whom he had given a blessing, that whatever he threw into the sea should become buoyant. At the command of Nūlū, the monkeys tore up the neighbouring mountains, and cast them into the sea. Hūnooman brought three mountains on his head at once, each 64 miles in circumference; and one

which, however, Ravūnū was constantly employed in breaking down. Vibhēeshūnū, Ravūnū's brother, perceiving that Ramū would make good his landing, recommended that Sēēta should be given up: but his brother, unable to bear this advice, quarrelled with Vibhēeshūnū; who came over to Ramū, and advised him to throw into the sea a temple and image of Shivū, assuring him, that as Ravūnū was a worshipper of Shivū, he would not destroy the temple and image of his god. Ramū followed this advice, soon made good his landing, and began the war with Ravūnū. After many giants had been killed, Koombhūkūrnū, a monstrous giant, 2,400 cubits high, and 1,600 thick, brother to Ravūnū, engaged Ramū and the monkeys. He began the combat by seizing and devouring his enemies. Some of them, as soon as they entered his mouth, came out at his nostrils and ears, and escaped. The terrified monkeys fled; but Ramū with his arrows first cut off his arms, then his legs. Still he waddled round, and endeavoured to devour all within his reach, till Ramū gave him a mortal wound in the neck. Next after Koombhūkūrnū, Indrūjit engaged in the contest. He seized Ramū, and, by the power of enchantment, carried him down to patalū; where Hūnooman went in search of him, and, while Mūhēeravūnū was there, instructing Indrūjit how to prostrate himself before an image of the goddess Bhūdrū-kalēē, Hūnooman cut off his head, and rescued Ramū. At length Ravūnū himself entered the combat; but after many conflicts, finding himself very weak, he resolved to restore Sēēta, and put an end to the war. To this Ramū consented; but while Ravūnū was on the point of bringing Sēēta, he thought within himself, 'If I do this, every one will charge

on each shoulder, equally large; together with one under each arm, one in each paw, and one on his tail. All these mountains being thrown into the sea, and becoming buoyant, a complete bridge was formed.

me with cowardice : shall I, a giant, refuse to fight?' The combat was again renewed, and Ravūnū was slain¹. Rāmū then obtained his wife ; but as a trial of her innocence while in the hands of Ravūnū, he compelled her to pass through a fiery ordeal : which she did unhurt. He then returned to Ūyodhya, and mounted the throne. After this, however, some person objected to Rāmū, that it was not proper for him to receive Sēṭa, after she had been in keeping of a giant. He therefore sent her into the forest to

¹ The engagement betwixt Rāmū and Ravūnū lasted seven days : Rāmū cut off the ten heads of Ravūnū a hundred times, but they were always miraculously restored. Rāmū then discharged an arrow which had these properties, that if it went into the air, it became a thousand ; if it entered the body of an enemy, it became an innumerable multitude. Ravūnū at the sight of this arrow was filled with fear, and would have fled ; but recollecting that Shivū had once given him an arrow that was to rescue him in a time of extreme peril, he discharged it, and destroyed Rāmū's terrible arrow. Still however he was full of fear, for whichever way he turned, he saw Rāmū ; he shut his eyes, but still he saw him in his mind. At length, perceiving no way of escape, he began to flatter Rāmū ; who was so softened, that he declared he would never destroy Ravūnū. The gods, alarmed lest Ravūnū should be spared, excited him to reproach Rāmū ; who, indignant at such conduct, let fly an arrow which pierced Ravūnū's body, proceeded through the earth into the regions below, and having there bathed, returned in the form of a goose, and again entered the quiver in its original shape. The gods were so much in fear of Ravūnū, that they durst not begin to rejoice till they were sure he was dead : in whispers they asked each other, 'Is he dead?'—'Is he really dead?' &c. When it was known that he was certainly dead, the gods, Rāmū, the monkeys, and the bears, all began to dance.—Mündodūrēc, the chief wife of Ravūnū, and mother of Indrūjit, after the death of her husband, went to Rāmū, weeping. Rāmū, not knowing who she was, gave her this blessing, that she should never become a widow. Finding his mistake, (having just killed her husband,) he ordered Hūnooman continually to throw wood into the fire ; according to a proverb among the Hindoos, that as long as the body of the husband is burning, a woman is not called a widow. To this day, therefore, Hūnooman keeps laying logs on the fire ; and every time a Hindoo puts his fingers in his ears and hears a sound, he says, he hears the bones of Ravūnū burning.

Valmēēkee, the writer of the Ramayññũ, where she was delivered of two sons, Lũvũ and Kooshũ; the latter of whom was afterwards stolen by the god Pũchanũñũ, when Valmēēkee, to comfort the mother, took a blade of kooshũ grass, and secretly made a child so much like Kooshũ, that Sēēta did not know it from her own son. In a short time, however, Pũchanũñũ, not being able to destroy a child of Ramũ's, restored Kooshũ, and Valmēēkee caused the two boys to become one. Before his death Ramũ performed the sacrifice of a horse^m; and Sēēta and her two sons, Lũvũ and Kooshũ, were restored to him: but Ramũ wishing Sēēta again to pass through a fiery ordeal, she entered the fire; but the goddess Prũt'hiveeⁿ, (Sēēta's mother,) opened her mouth, and received her into patalũ. At length Kalũ-poorooshũ, the angel of death, went to Ramũ, expressing a wish for a secret conference. Ramũ promised that while he was present no one should be admitted, and placed Lũkshmũñũ at the door to keep out all intruders: but while Ramũ and Kalũ-poorooshũ were closeted, Doorvasa, the sage, arrived, and demanded an interview with Ramũ. This sage was so very passionate, that every one dreaded contradicting him; Lũkshmũñũ, therefore, through fear, went in and announced his arrival. Ramũ, for this offence, rejected his brother, who in a paroxysm of grief drowned himself in the sacred river Sũrũyoo, and went to heaven. Ramũ afterwards put an end to his life in the same manner. Lũvũ and Kooshũ succeeded him^o.

^m This sacrifice was performed by many of the ancient Hindoo princes, and was considered as highly meritorious.

ⁿ The earth personified.

^o There are a few sentences in this history, which are not to be found in Valmēēkee's Ramayññũ; but they may be seen in the Bengalee translation.

The image of Ramū is painted green; he is represented as sitting on a throne, or on Hūnooman, the monkey, with a crown upon his head. He holds in one hand a bow, in another an arrow, and has a bundle of arrows slung at his back.

The worship paid to him is of the same kind as that to Krishnū; but the formulas are different. On the fifth of the increase of the moon in Choitrū, on which day Ramū was born, an annual festival is held, when multitudes of clay images are worshipped. The dolū festival also is observed in honour of this god on this day, which is also kept as a fast; when Ramū's three brothers, Bhūrūtū, Lūkshmūnū, and Shūtrūghnū are worshipped, but the images of the first and last are never made. At other festivals also a few ceremonies in honour of Ramū are performed.

The birth of Ramū forms the seventh of the Hindoo incarnations. On the birth-day of this god^p the Hindoo merchants in general begin their new year's accounts. At the time of death, many Hindoos write the name of Ramū on the breast and forehead of the dying person, with earth taken from the banks of the Ganges; and hence these persons after death, instead of being dragged to Yūmū to be judged, immediately ascend to heaven. Many of the disciples of Ramū become Ramahoots, a class of mendicants who impress on different parts of their bodies Ramū's name, and the figure of his foot. The mark on the forehead of Ramū's followers very much resembles a trident.

^p The gods on this day are said to have caused a shower of flowers to fall, as at the birth of Minerva it is said to have rained gold.

Temples containing the images of Ramũ, Lũkshmũnũ, Sēēta, and Hũnooman are erected in many parts of Bengal; and the worship of Ramũ performed in them daily.

SECT. VII.—*Choitũnyũ* ¹.

THIS is the image of an almost naked mendicant, painted yellow. Some of the Hindoos believe, that amongst all the Hindoo incarnations there are four principal ones. The first, in the sũtyũ-yoogũ, called the Shooklũ-vũrnũ ² incarnation, was that of Ũnũntũ; that in the tréta, the rũktũ-vũrnũ ³, was the incarnation of Kopilũ-dévũ; that in the dwapũrũ-yoogũ, the Krishnũ-vũrnũ ⁴; and the last, in the kũlee-yoogũ, called pēētũ-vũrnũ ⁵, that of Choitũnyũ.

According to the disciples of Choitũnyũ, the founder of this sect, Ŭdwoitũ, a voidikũ bramhũn, lived at Shanti-poorũ about 400 years ago. Nityanũndũ, another leader, was born at Nũdēēya, a little before Choitũnyũ. His father was a rarhēēyũ bramhũn. Choitũnyũ's father, Jũ-gunnat'hũ-Mishrũ, a voidikũ bramhũn, lived at Nũdēēya; his wife's name was Shũchēē; their first son, Vishwũmb-hũrũ, embraced the profession of a dũndēē. The mother was advanced in years when Choitũnyũ was born; the child continued three days without taking the breast, and the parents, not thinking it would live, putting it into a basket, hung it on a tree near the house ⁶. At this time

¹ The wise. ² The white. ³ The blood-coloured. ⁴ The black.

⁵ The yellow.

⁶ There are still many instances of children being exposed. If a child appear unlikely to live, the parents consult an astrologer, who perhaps gives but small hopes of the child's recovery. *Voiragees* and other men-

Ūdwoitū before-mentioned, who had heard of this birth, having some suspicions that it might be the incarnation he had expected and foretold, visited the parents, and learning from the mother that she had not received the initiating incantation of Huree, he wrote, with his great toe, this incantation on the soft earth:—‘ Huree, Krishnū ; Hūree, Krishnū ; Krishnū, Krishnū, Hūree, Hūree ; Hūree, Ramū, Hūree, Ramū, Ramū, Ramū, Huree, Huree.’ After the mother had received this incantation, the child was taken down, and immediately began to draw the breast.

Choitūnyū made a great progress in learning ; at sixteen he married Vishnoo-priya, and continued in a secular state till forty-four, when he was persuaded by Ūdwoitū and other dūndēēs then at his house, to renounce his poita, and become a mendicant: upon which, forsaking his mother and wife, he went to Benares. His family was reduced to great distress indeed; and it was thought a crime that a person upon whom such a family depended should embrace a life of mendicity.

From this period Choitūnyū began to form a new sect, giving to all his followers the preceding initiatory incantation, and continuing to call them voishnūvūs. He exhorted them to renounce a secular life ; to visit the different

dicants, who make a merit of possessing no worldly attachments, sometimes hang up a child in a pot in a tree ; or, putting it in a pot, let it float down the river: Persons of other casts may do it, but these the most frequently. Mr. Carey’s journal, dated in July, 1794, contains the following paragraph: ‘ One day, as Mr. Thomas and I were riding out, we saw a basket hung in a tree, in which an infant had been exposed ; the skull remained, but the rest had been devoured by ants.’ See Baptist Mission Accounts, vol. i. p. 183. This practice is now prohibited by the Hon. Company’s Government, in a regulation made for that purpose.

holy places on pilgrimage; to eat with all casts who should receive the preceding incantation; to repeat the name of Vishnoo, using the bead-roll made with the stalk of basil. He further taught that widows might marry; but forbade the eating of fish or flesh, and the worship of the deities to whom bloody sacrifices are offered, as well as all communion with those who make these sacrifices.

He went to Jügünnat'hü-kshétru in Orissa, and there assuming six arms, received many honours. He exhorted Ūdwoitü and Nityanündü to labour in making proselytes; but directed Nityanündü to enter into a secular state^y: he did so, and took up his residence at Khürdü, near Calcutta. Choitünyü wrote to his two principal disciples from Orissa, again exhorting them to labour in gaining proselytes; yet few or none joined them: and from this time Choitünyü himself was never more heard of. Ūdwoitü and Nityanündü raised families, whose descendants live at Shantipoorü, Vagna-para, and Khürdü to this day, where they are become leaders of the sect; all other Gosaees^z acknowledging the descendants of these two families as their superiors, and prostrating themselves before them. These Gosaees at present are men of large fortunes; at whose houses are the images originally set up by the male descendant of Choitünyü, by Nityanündü, and Ūdwoitü. Crowds are almost constantly arriving at these places with offerings: besides which, the Gosaees derive a large revenue from marriages, to superintend which they have agents distributed throughout the country, who are allowed a sixth part of the fee; a sum that from both parties amounts to about six shillings. They also dissolve marriages at the

^y Perceiving his aversion to a life of mendicity.

^z Distant branches of the same families,

pleasure of the parties, on receiving the same fees. When a new disciple is initiated, a fee is also given; but the Gosaees obtain the largest sums at the deaths of such of their disciples as die intestate. At Calcutta, nearly all the women of ill-fame profess the religion of Choitūnyū before their death, that they may be entitled to some sort of funeral rites: as almost all these persons die intestate, and have no relations who will own them, the Gosaees obtain their effects.

The anniversaries of the deaths of the original founders of the sect are observed as festivals.

One fifth of the whole Hindoo population of Bengal are supposed to be followers of Choitūnyū, and of the Gosaees, his successors.

Many of these persons despise the other sects of Hindoos, and are great enemies of the bramhūns. They refuse to eat without their necklace, as the bramhūns do without their poita. Most of the mendicant followers of Vishnoo have embraced the tenets of Choitūnyū; but many of the disciples of the latter live in a secular state, and some of them are possessed of large property. Persons of this description frequently entertain a great number of voiragees at their houses; when, as an act of great merit, they prostrate themselves before these wanderers, wash, and lick the dust of their feet, and devour their orts. They pay no attention to the feasts and fasts of the Hindoo calendar, except those in honour of Krishnū.

The images most regarded among this sect are those of Choitūnyū and Nityanūndū, set up at Ūmbika, in the district of Burdwan.

About a hundred years ago, another man rose up in Bengal as the leader of a sect, whose dress, of many colours, is said to be so heavy that two or three people can scarcely carry it. This and his string of beads are preserved as relics at Ghoshparū, where he continued five years, and died at the house of Ramū-Shūrūnū-Palū, a shōōdrū of the Sūd-gopū cast, to whom he communicated his supernatural powers; and who, after the death of this mendicant, began to teach the doctrine of a constant incarnation, and that God then dwelt in him. He persuaded many that he could cure the leprosy, and other diseases; and preached the doctrines of Choitūnyū, imitating him in conforming, for convenience sake, to many of the superstitions of the Hindoos. He also gave a new initiating incantation to his followers^a, who, of whatever cast, ate together privately. Vast multitudes joined this man, both Mūsūlmans and Hindoos; and carried him presents, eating together once or twice a year. By this means, from a state of deep poverty he became rich, and his son now lives in affluence.

A number of Ramū-Shūrūnū's disciples adhere to his son Doolalū; others follow Shivū-Ramū and some others of the old man's disciples, who pretend to have received the power of their master to cure diseases, &c. Though part of the father's followers have thus apostatized, Doolalū pretends that he has now 20,000 disciples.

^a The following is a translation of this incantation: 'O sinless Lord, O great Lord; at thy pleasure I go and return: not a moment am I without thee. I am ever with thee; save, O great Lord.'